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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000842

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION POST-COUP UPDATE 7

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 809

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 786

[1](#)C. TEGUCIGALPA 695

[1](#)D. TEGUCIGALPA 687

[1](#)E. TEGUCIGALPA 661

[1](#)F. TEGUCIGALPA 543

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Simon Henshaw, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Demonstrations in Honduras have been peaceful since violent outbreaks on August 12 and 13. However, allegations of human rights violations continue to be made by various human rights groups following the departure of the visiting delegation from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on August 22. The de facto regime continues to downplay the IACHR delegation's interim report. Post is investigating closely allegations of the August 14 rape of a female protestor by four police officers in the Department of Choloma and other reports of sexual abuse by police of detained female protestors. End Summary.

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LATEST ALLEGATIONS  
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[1](#)2. (C) Human Rights organizations allege that on August 14, police detained 25 year-old Irma Villanueva at a pro-Zelaya demonstration in the Department of Choloma and that during her detention she was raped by four police officers. During a radio interview, Villanueva said that policemen told her during the alleged rape that "now you are going to see what happens to you for you being where you should not be." On August 26, PolOff spoke to Regina Fonseca of the Center for the Rights of Women (CDM) who indicated that Villanueva filed charges with the prosecutor's office in San Pedro Sula on August 17 and that on August 26 the prosecutor's office asked Villanueva to take them to the scene of the alleged crime. Fonseca, a psychologist, traveled to Choloma on August 18 to provide support to the victim and also accompanied Villanueva on August 19 to an appearance before the visiting delegation of the IACHR in San Pedro Sula. The reporting regarding the Villanueva case by human rights organizations matches a comment IACHR President Luz Patricia Mejia made to Poloff and other G-16 donor representatives during a meeting in which Mejia expressed concern for the poor treatment of women in detention and "one particularly bad case near San Pedro Sula."

[1](#)3. (C) Fonseca described the rape as the most serious case of violence against women since June 28, and added that her organization has documented 19 other specific cases of women detained since June 28 who have been sexually abused by police. Post will report via septel the details of these allegations after further investigation.

¶4. (C) National Police contacts told Emboff that they have no record of a pending investigation into an alleged rape on August 14 in Choloma but stated they will investigate the allegation. Post will continue to follow closely the case of the alleged rape of Villanueva. (Note: while mistreatment of women in detention has occurred in the past in Honduras, the Villanueva case demonstrates different characteristics including the allegation by the victim that the police justified their actions by stating that Villanueva's rape was punishment for her presence at a pro-Zelaya demonstration. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) Pro-Zelaya radio station "Radio Globo" continues limited operations on a smaller transmitter following the August 23 sabotage by masked men of the radio's transmitters. Its sister television station, "Canal 36," continues to be off the air as a result of the same attack (Reftel A).

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DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE BUT NO VIOLENCE  
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¶6. (SBU) Demonstrations continued during the week-long visit of the IACHR from August 17 to August 21 and during the two-day visit of Foreign Ministers on August 24-25 sponsored by the Organization of American States. There have been no reports of violence during demonstrations since August 13.

¶7. (SBU) During the recent high-profile visits from the Foreign Ministers and IACHR, many pro-regime supporters argued that pro-Zelaya demonstrators planned to increase the

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level of vandalism in order to elicit a strong response from the military during the visit of the IACHR and the OAS Foreign Ministers, however that turned out to be false. On the other hand, pro-Zelaya demonstrators alleged that the military was gentler than normal in their response to demonstrations because of the two high profile visits.

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IACHR Visit August 17-21  
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¶8. (C) Press coverage continues to downplay the human rights situation following the visit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Ref B). Local press continues to characterize the interim report of the IACHR as proof that there is "no bloodbath in Honduras." The de facto Foreign Minister, Carlos Lopez Contreras, made public statements on August 21 describing the interim report as containing "no big surprises."

¶9. (C) On August 25, the de facto government made public statements that characterized the IACHR report as proof that the human rights situation was not as serious as it had been described by President Zelaya. However, the interim government did not respond to the specific findings of the report only stating generally that the Honduran National Police and Army acted in accordance with the Constitution and laws of Honduras. The interim report documents various human rights violations, including: the disproportionate use of police force, arbitrary detention of thousands of Hondurans, the arbitrary application of curfew, violation of the freedom of expression, and limits on the freedom of press. The delegation called particular attention to four reported deaths and called for a thorough investigation given indications that the deaths are tied to agents of the state. The four deaths are: Pedro Pablo Hernandez who was killed by the military at a checkpoint in Jamastran on August 2 (Ref C), Roger Vallejo who died from injuries sustained during protests on July 30 (Ref D), Pedro Magdiel Munoz Salvadon who was found dead July 25 near the border with Nicaragua (Ref E), and Isis Obed Murillo who was killed July 5 at Toncontin Airport (Ref F). (Note: In the case of Munoz Salvadon,

although his death warrants attention given the political activity at the border at the time of his death, there is no evidence directly tying his death to the political crisis and the nature of the death was not atypical in a country with one of the highest murder rates in the world. End Note.)

¶10. (C) Comment: The spotlight on human rights in Honduras by international organizations and the international press in the past week has resulted in what appears to be peaceful demonstrations and less use of force by police during protests. Given the characterization of the situation in the de-facto regime's response to the IACHR report, it does not appear that conditions will improve anytime soon. Post is taking seriously allegations of the rape of a female protestor by police and will continue to verify all allegations of targeted violence or abuse against female demonstrators. End Comment.

HENSHAW